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PEACH LEAF CURL

By W. P. CASS SMITH, Government Plant Pathologist

Peach leaf curl caused by the fungus Taphrina deformans is a very common disease in this State during the spring and early summer. In addition to attacking both edible and flowering peaches, the fungus also attacks nectarines, and very occasionally apricots. When preventive measures are neglected the disease may be anticipated yearly commencing in spring.

Leaf Curl infection is most obvious on the leaves which become enlarged, thickened, blistered and greatly distorted. The whole of a leaf may be affected but generally only portions are attacked. The curled portions turn yellow with a pink tinge and may become a deep red, and a whitish bloom covers the surface. Finally, the affected leaves turn brown and fall, so that when the attack is severe, heavy defoliation occurs. In this State new leaves which develop following this defoliation generally remain healthy and by December the trees appear quite normal. However, when through neglect to control the disease, defoliation occurs each year, the trees are seriously weakened.

Shoot and fruit infection may also occur but are less common than leaf infection. Shoots become stunted, curved and more or less distorted when affected with disease, and the terminal bud generally dies. Fruit infection, with us, is noted more frequently on nectarines than peaches and shows as red, irregular, blistered areas which give the appearance of early ripening.

CONTROL OF PEACH LEAF CURL

Fortunately Leaf Curl is easily controlled. In fact it responds to treatment more readily than any other important disease of fruit trees. One thorough spraying with Bordeaux mixture (6-4-50) +
calcium caseinate spreader at any time during the dormant period is effective. When applied in autumn at leaf fall, this spray gives excellent control of Leaf Curl and it also helps to control the more serious Shot Hole disease.

In home gardens, copper oxychloride, which is easier to prepare, may be used instead of Bordeaux mixture but it is not generally so effective.

If for any reason preventive spraying is not carried out, and the leaves of peaches or nectarines actually become infected, little can be done to control the disease until the next season, as secondary infections are uncommon in this State.

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FRIESIANS BREAK RECORD

Two Friesian cows owned by Mr. L. A. Jackman of North Dandalup, have broken the existing junior two year old Western Australian Friesian record for butterfat production.

The previous record was held by “Riverdale Dutch Inka” owned by Mr. L. Pensini, with a production of 14,805 lb. Milk, 3.4% test and 507 lb. butterfat.

Mr. Jackman’s “Dandala Delphine Jewel” broke the record when she completed her test of 11,907 lb. Milk, 4.3% test and 509 lb. butterfat in a 300 day lactation. Her dam is “Dandala Marshal’s Delphine.”

In the following month Dandala Marshal’s “Delilah”, a half-sister to “Jewel” then broke Jewel’s record with a production of 13,560 lb. Milk, 3.8% test and 514 lb. butterfat in 300 days.

Delilah’s dam is “Dandala Transvaal Deidre” and the sire of both of the cows is “Murray Glen Transvaal Field Marshal.”

A notable feature of these performances is that the lactations were completed in the months of January and February.